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301354Z May 03

UNCLAS ROME 002408

SIPDIS

FROM AMBASSADOR HALL FOR AMBASSADORS BREMER, RAPHEL AND KENNEDY

NEA PASS TO ORHA FOR AMBASSADORS BREMER, RAPHEL AND KENNEDY

NICOSIA FOR ADMINISTRATOR NATSIOS

STATE FOR U/S LARSON, U/S GROSSMAN, IO A/S HOLMES, PRM
A/S DEWEY, EUR/NE, EUR/WE, SA/INS, IO/EDA S. WINNICK
USDA/FAS FOR U/S PENN, MCHAMBLISS, RTILSWORTH AND
LPANASUK
USAID FOR AA/DCHA WINTER, D/DCHA/OFDA BMCCONNELL,
D/DCHA/FFP LANDIS
JOINT STAFF FOR JE/J4/J5
NSC FOR JDWORKEN

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [AORC](#) [EAID](#) [EAGR](#) [IZ](#) [WFP](#)

SUBJECT: TFIZ01: WFP PURCHASE OF IRAQI WHEAT

1. IMMEDIATELY UPON MY RETURN TO POST, I SPOKE WITH WORLD FOOD PROGRAM (WFP) EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR JIM MORRIS ON THURSDAY, MAY 29, 2003 CONCERNING WFP'S PURCHASE OF IRAQI WHEAT. I EMPHASIZED THAT VERY RAPID ACTION IS CRITICAL. THE ATTENTION OF THE WORLD IS ON THE SITUATION IN IRAQ RIGHT NOW AND SPEED, COORDINATION AND EFFECTIVENESS ARE REQUIRED.

2. JIM MORRIS TOLD ME THAT WFP HAS JUST FINALIZED A USD 152 MILLION COMMITMENT TO BUY THE WHEAT. THEY BELIEVE -- AND I SHARE THEIR VIEW -- THAT GIVEN THE FACT THAT THIS PROJECT STARTED ABOUT A WEEK AGO, THAT IS VERY QUICK TURNAROUND. THE PURCHASE PRICE OF USD 105/METRIC TON WAS JUST FINALIZED ON MAY 22. THEY ARE GRATEFUL THAT THEY WERE ABLE TO ACCOMPLISH SO MUCH IN SO LITTLE TIME.

3. THEY UNDERSTAND THE URGENCY. WE ALL UNDERSTAND THE NEED FOR WFP TO DEMONSTRATE ONCE AGAIN THAT THEY ARE UP TO THE JOB. TWENTY PERCENT OF THEIR PROFESSIONAL STAFF IS DEVOTED TO IRAQ AND IS IN THE REGION, IN ADDITION TO SENIOR LEADERSHIP AT HEADQUARTERS GIVEN THEIR EXTRAORDINARY PERFORMANCE IN AVERTING WIDESPREAD STARVATION IN AFGHANISTAN, AND THEIR WORK SO FAR IN PROVIDING FOOD AID TO MILLIONS OF IRAQIS, OUR EXPECTATIONS ARE NOT UNREASONABLE.

4. WE NEED TO MAKE SURE THAT LINES OF COMMUNICATIONS ARE OPEN BETWEEN THE FIELD AND ROME; THAT WE ARE ABLE TO SATISFY WFP'S REQUESTS OF US FOR ASSISTANCE; THAT IN-COUNTRY CAPABILITY -- IN PARTICULAR, OUR MISSION'S SENIOR HUMANITARIAN COORDINATOR, REGINA DAVIS, CURRENTLY ON THE USAID DART TEAM IN IRAQ -- IS FULLY UTILIZED; AND THAT THE DAY-TO-DAY PROBLEMS INHERENT WITH AN OPERATION OF THIS SIZE DO NOT BECOME MAJOR ISSUES. HALL

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